

Research Article

Studying the Association of Quality of Life and Happiness among University Students

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Received: 2016.07.05 Accepted: 2016.09.14

Abstract

Background: Family is the first training base and certainly first and foremost focus sound upbringing of children's rehabilitation and talents. Each family has a special way as parenting style used in the education of their children who are affected by different factors, including cultural, social, political and economic. The quality of life, happiness, success, discipline, and many of these variables have relationship with demographic characteristics of parents. In this study, the researchers went on to examine Quality of life, happiness and some demographic variables such as education, average and some other variable and associating them with parental demographic characteristics such as income, occupation, education level, etc.

Methods: This descriptive correlational study was done among students from four universities of medical sciences: Azad, Payam Noor and Torbat University. Data gathering tools were Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and the second version of the questionnaire SF 36. Data were analyzed using the software SPSS 21.

Results: The average of happiness was 15.17 ± 43.78 and quality of life average was in a range of minimum of 40.41 ± 58.87 for psychological problems up to a maximum of 16.99 ± 87.56 for the physical performance. Happiness has a significant positive correlation with all aspects of the quality of life ($P \leq 0.05$). The happiness had a significant relationship with family income, father education, mother education, maternal personality types and personality type's father. The quality of life was correlated with parent education.

Conclusion: It seems that happiness and quality of life depend on each other in students that the impact of parent's demographic variables in the promotion of these two indicators is significant. Therefore it is recommended that in the future by changing the content and also increase the number of studies on quality of life and happiness a more comprehensive approach to these structures was obtained.

Keywords: quality of life, happiness, demographic characteristics of parents

Introduction

Family is the most important educational institute to grow and develop children's abilities. The greatest part of developing children's wisdom and emotion, which constitute the fundamentals of a happy life, is in parents' hands [1]. In the educational system of family, parents have a crucial role in their child's life. The absence of one parent leaves destructive effects in the quality of life of children and

family as well [2]. Each family has its own way of upbringing which is greatly affected by cultural, social, political, and economical factors [3]. In the recent years, psychologists have studied the interaction between children and their caregivers as well as the association of a mother's behavioral dimensions with children's behavior, while we are aware of the importance of a father's role in family and upbringing of children [4]. Studies on parenting and upbringing styles show that educational achievement and its lack thereof are significantly rooted in family background. Such factors as parents' occupation, parents' education, education, the economic state of the family, and housing quality are effective in children's educational achievement. In other words, children from different social and economic background show different achievement in education [5]. Several studies show that social rank has considerable effect on values, attitudes, and priorities in choosing the major of study and occupation. Support from family, for instance, is positively associated with life satisfaction and lower level of negative feelings such as loneliness, anxiety, and depression [6].

Employment is any kind of common and legal mental or physical activity for which the person is paid. It results in production goals or services [7]. Nowadays, 35-60% of European women aged 16-60 work outside [8]. Along with the development in technology and capitalism, Workplace and home were separated and employed women were obliged to spend hours away from home and children every day. This influences the extent of supervision on children and taking care of them. According to statistics released by Programming and Management Organization of Iran, the rate of employment in women is 11%. It has been reported to be 13% and higher than 30% according to some unofficial statistics [9]. Samiyan [2011] stated that the quality of life is an ambiguous concept. On the one hand, a person's quality of life is a conception of how they spend their life. On the other hand, it includes the quality of available circumstances such as the predominant atmosphere of the society or culture. Carter [1985] defines quality of life as a person's satisfaction of life and environment. His definition includes needs, demands, priorities, life style, and other visible and invisible factors which affect a person's well-being [10].

Throughout history, human has been longing for things to give him more satisfaction and contentment. Perceived happiness and well-being are common terms in psychology to explain a mental or emotional state of well-being. Happiness, which is the ultimate goal of human, is in fact a person's evaluation of himself and his life [11]. According to Berber [1998], happiness is a variable with biological basis. It is not created by conditions and environment [12]. Schneider [1991] defines happiness as person's attitude which helps him to approach problems and difficult situations. It also gives the person courage to fight hopelessness and depression.

Methods

This descriptive correlational study was done among university students in Torbat Heidarieh City in 2015. Four main universities were selected from among all universities in Torbat Heidarieh including University of Medical Sciences, Azad (Private University), Payam-e-noor (Distance-learning), and University of Applied Science and Technology. Demographic characteristics questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Inventory, and the 36-item Short Form Health Survey (WHO SF36) were used to collect data.

Oxford Happiness Test comprises of 29 items which measures personal happiness. The fundamental of this test is the definition of happiness by Argyle and Croxall. They suggested that happiness is a combination of three main components: the frequency and degree of positive affect or joy; the average level of satisfaction over a period; and the absence of negative feelings such as depression and anxiety. Happiness Test was initially devised by Michael Argyle on the basis of Beck Depression Inventory (1979). Working from this definition, they developed the Oxford Happiness Inventory by reversing the 21 items of Beck Depression Inventory (Beck et al. 1961) and adding 11 further items to cover aspects of subjective wellbeing not so far included. Each item on Happiness questionnaire has 4 items. Respondents should choose the choice which describes his state best. Happiness Inventory is widely used in Happiness research.

Argyle et al. (1989) reported a reliability of 0.09 using Cronbach alpha, and a seven-week test-retest reliability of 0.78. The concurrent validity of 0.43 was established against happiness ratings by friends. In addition, construct validity was established against recognized measures of three hypothesized components of happiness showing correlations of +0.32 with the positive affect scale of Bradburn Balanced Affect measure (Bradburn 1969), -0.52 with the Beck Depression Inventory, and +0.57 with Argyle's life satisfaction index.

In a study conducted in 4 districts of Tehran (2, 18, 11, and 5), Karaj, Shahriyar, and Eslamshar among a sample of 142 male and 227 female students and employers with average age of 24.11, Alipoor and Agah (2007) reported a high construct validity of 0.91 Alpha (Cronbach) for all the 29 items of Oxford Happiness Inventory, Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, and Beck Depression Inventory. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Oxford Happiness Inventory with Beck Depression Inventory as well as extroverted and introverted sub-scales of Essence Personality Questionnaire were -0.48, 0.45, and -0.39 respectively. It confirms the convergent and divergent reliability validity of Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI). The results of factor analysis provided 5 extracted factors: